

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 003421

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/05/2015

TAGS: [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [EG](#)

SUBJECT: EGYPT: NOTES ON THE APRIL 30 CAIRO TERRORIST INCIDENTS

REF: A. CAIRO 3239

[B](#). CAIRO 3184

[C](#). CAIRO 3183

[D](#). CAIRO 2969

[E](#). CAIRO 2898

Classified by A/DCM Michael Corbin for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

-----  
Summary  
-----

[1](#)1. (C) A clearer picture of the April 30 terrorist attacks in Cairo is beginning to emerge. The two attacks, one a bombing that killed the perpetrator and wounded several foreigners and Egyptians, and the other a bungled shoot-up of a tourist bus, are directly linked: the bus shooters, two women in full veil, are the sister and probable fiancée of the bomber, and all are reportedly linked to the suspected conspirators in the April 7 Khan el-Khalili bombing. The attacks have been universally condemned by Egyptian religious figures and media commentators, as well as the Muslim Brotherhood and the imprisoned leadership of the terrorist Islamic Jihad and Islamic Group organizations. The GOE's public approach has been to stress the random, limited, and isolated nature of the attacks and attackers. However, with the fourth attack in eight months, and the third in Cairo in a month, this approach may be wearing thin, and many Cairenes are worried that Egypt's victory against domestic terrorism may be eroding. End summary.

[1](#)2. (SBU) While some of the details of the twin April 30 terrorist attacks in Cairo remain obscure, the basic facts are now fairly clear. At approximately 3:15 p.m. local time, Ihab Youssry Yassin Ali detonated an explosive device at Abdel Moneim Riyadh Square, a major Cairo intersection roughly between the rear of the Egyptian National Museum and the Ramses Hilton. The explosion killed Ihab and wounded four foreigners, including two Israelis, a Swede, and an Italian, as well as several Egyptian passers-by.

[1](#)3. (SBU) The GOE had been aggressively pursuing Ihab as a suspected conspirator in the April 7 Khan el-Khalili bombing although he was not one of the four conspirators listed when the GOE listed the "complete" list of conspirators on April 17 (ref D). Ihab's explosive device was, according to multiple accounts, a crude improvised device similar to that employed by Hassan Bashandi, the April 7 bomber. Some accounts claim that Ihab was being pursued by police and jumped from a bridge before detonating his explosives, while others say he simply got out of a taxi at the square before committing the act.

[1](#)4. (SBU) Approximately 45 minutes after Yassin detonated his bomb at Abdel Moneim Square, his sister, Nagat Youssry Yassin Ali, and Iman Ibrahim Khamis, variously reported as Ihab Yassin's fiancée or wife (or neither), arrived at the Sayyeda Aisha mosque near the base of Cairo's citadel, about three miles east of the site of the first incident. According to some reports, they came in the same taxi that had dropped Ihab off at Abdel Moneim Riyadh Square. The two women, clad in full Islamist garb including completely veiled faces, opened fire on a bus carrying a group of Austrian tourists (widely misreported to have been Israelis). Shots fired by Nagat and/or Iman shattered windows in the bus, but failed to injure any of the passengers. According to most accounts, Nagat (using a pistol) shot Iman, and then herself, in an apparent bid at "martyrdom" and/or to evade capture. In subsequent public accounts of the incident, the Ministry of Interior announced that Ihab and Nagat's 17 year-old brother Mohammed Youssry Yassin Ali was wanted as a suspected conspirator in the attacks, but remained at large, possibly in possession of an additional explosive device.

[1](#)5. (SBU) International media reported claims of responsibility for the acts by the "Abdullah Azzam Brigades," a group which had also claimed responsibility for the October 7, 2004 attacks in the Sinai, and the previously unknown "Mujahideen of Egypt." In an exclusive May 1 interview to the pro-government Gomhouriya newspaper, Adly asserted that the two acts were the work of a "random" group unaffiliated with wider "jihadist" networks and specifically discounted claims made by the two groups.

16. (C) The GOE reacted to the events by markedly stepping up security across town (and in Egypt generally), with particular attention to areas frequented by tourists/foreigners. Internal security forces personnel also moved into Shubra al-Khaima, the crowded, impoverished northern suburb of Cairo where Ihab, Nagat, and other suspects lived, and arrested friends and associates of the attackers for questioning. Varying accounts put the number detained at 100-200.

17. (SBU) As with the April 7 bombing in the Khan el-Khalili bazaar (refs D and E), condemnation of the April 30 attacks has been universal. As noted in ref A, religious leaders including the Mufti of the Republic and the Sheikh of al-Azhar promptly condemned the attacks in the strongest possible terms as did a broad range of leading columnists and editors. In its statement, the Muslim Brotherhood condemned the attack, but added that such attacks "only serve U.S.-Zionist plots against Egypt." The imprisoned leadership of the terrorist Egyptian Islamic Jihad and Islamic Group also issued statements of condemnation.

18. (SBU) In media commentary, some have taken comfort from the appearance that the two attacks were committed by a closed circle of relatives and associates of the planners and perpetrators of the April 7 attack while others have openly wondered how many other "freelancers" are lurking in the background. Several commentators, while condemning the incidents, urged that the GOE not use them as a pretext for putting the brakes on political reform. Many have been shocked by the fact that two women, in full robes and veils, shattered the perceived "gender barrier" in Islamist terrorism, and there has been a significant amount of commentary and debate about the implications. With a handful of exceptions, (so far) there has been a marked reduction in the amount of conspiratorial innuendo in the tabloid press (finding "foreign hands" behind the April 30 attacks).

-----  
Comment  
-----

19. (C) The GOE's public relations approach to this attack, as with the April 7 bombing in the Khan el-Khalili and the October 2004 attacks in the Sinai, has been to emphasize the "random" nature of the attack, the non-affiliation of the attackers to wider networks, and the fact that "all but one" of the suspects are either dead or in custody. This approach, clearly designed to dilute public anxiety and preempt cancellations that could devastate the tourist industry, is wearing thin.

110. (C) In the cases of both the April 7 Cairo attack and the October 2004 Sinai attacks, the "complete" list of conspirators confidently revealed by the GOE subsequently proved to be incomplete. The GOE's arrest of up to 2400 persons in the Al-Arish area of Northern Sinai following the October 2004 attacks, as well as the recent arrest of up to 200 in Shubra al-Khaima, is clear evidence that the Government does not believe its own propaganda about having thoroughly identified, and accounted for, the "small," "unaffiliated" and "random" terror cells.

111. (C) This is not to say that the GOE has been lethargic in its reaction to these attacks. In fact the opposite is true. However, the government's method of conducting mass arrests of scores or hundreds of people acquainted with the suspects, while arguably an effective "dragnet" approach, raises serious human rights concerns, and the GOE could be making new enemies should those questioned be subjected to mistreatment and/or prolonged detention as appears to have been the case in Al-Arish. The fact that Ihab Youssry Yassin, wanted for several weeks by the government, managed to evade arrest, and conduct another attack, may poke holes in the Ministry of Interior's reputation for ruthless efficiency. With the fourth terrorist attack in eight months, and the third within a month, many are voicing legitimate concerns that Egypt's victory against domestic terror groups could be eroding as new and more amorphous threats emerge. End comment.

Visit Embassy Cairo's Classified Website:  
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/cairo>

You can also access this site through the  
State Department's Classified SIPRNET website.

GRAY